



Achievements and limits of rice projects in lowlands of northern Ghana

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Lowland rice projects in Northern Ghana



In the past, two **notable pilot projects** on the improvement of rice sector in Northern Ghana were financed by AFD:

- Lowland Rice Development Project (LRDP, 1998 – 2003) and
- Food Security and Rice Producers Organizations Project (FSRPOP, 2003 – 2008)

Both were pilots, **executed mainly in valleys around Tamale** (regional capital of Northern Region), where rice grown in valleys has a long tradition.



Lowland Rice Development Project

LRDP had a very **positive technical achievements** with respect to

- land area bunded on contour,
- number of beneficiaries and
- increased yields,

but **steady decline** of all these parameters was observed after cessation of the project.







Food Security and Rice Producers Organizations Project

FSRPOP was designed to address these problems through:

- **Improved input and service supply, credit access, as well as**
- **Improved management and maintenance of the bunds**
- **Improved credit recovery**

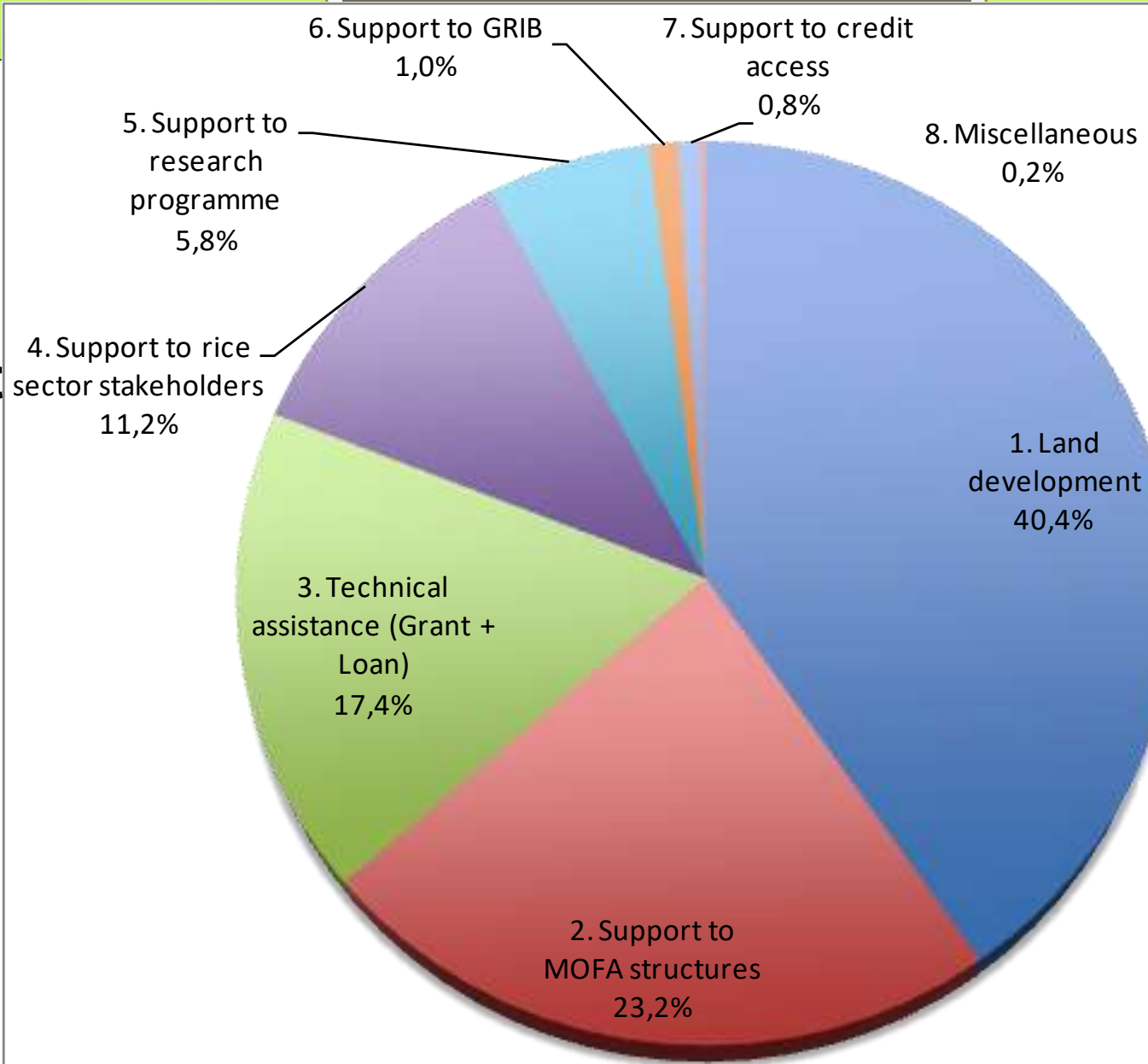
RICE SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT (RSSP)



Following these two successful pilots, the Government of Ghana signed an agreement with the “Agence Française de Développement” (AFD) in 2007 for the financing of the much larger, “Rice Sector Support Project”, RSSP in August 2007, covering three northern regions, as well as northern Volta region.

RSSP was funded through a loan of 12,5 million Euros and a grant of 1,3 million Euros. With extensions, project lasted till 2016.

- RSSP aspired to achieve a **major impact** in rice production in Ghana and to considerably **reduce the imports** into the country.



Breakdown of the RSSP AFD funding per component

Some Planned Activities of RSSP:



- Bunds and water retention/distribution structures construction in the valley bottoms
- Credit access for the farmers and other stakeholders
- Research activities to address the producers' and environmental needs.
- The rice sector based organizations and stakeholders strengthening





Land Tenure & Crop selection issues

- RSSP used **the same approach across the 4 regions** where it was implemented
- This was not most appropriate, as **rice farmers** in different regions had a **varied ownership arrangements**, some were land owners and others rented the plots under diverse payment arrangements
- There were also **disputes between rice and other farmers** (maize or tree crops, ex cocoa), resulting in broken bunds or cut trees

Bunds construction and maintenance/regulatory structures

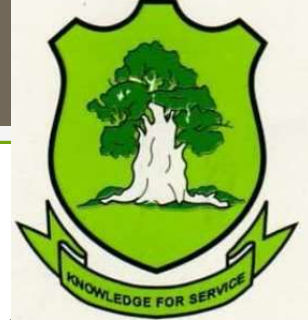


- Construction of **bunds** was carried out in **all selected valleys** of RSSP.
- There was **little or no maintenance** and routine repair of the bunds after construction, as in some cases training of farmers was done 2 years before construction and information was forgotten
- Retention and regulatory **structures were poorly constructed or incomplete** in many cases at the end of project life (these were constructed only in northern Volta Region)



Water cannot not pass through this structure!

Wooden gates used in construction



76% of all bunded rice fields surveyed had water problems (retention, drainage, broken bunas, etc.) at the end of the project life



More angled pipes, planned for water delivery to the field, but not used



Structure constructed, but water not passing through, angled pipe shown in front



Water User Management Committees

- LRDP and FSRPOP gave lots of attention to formation and training of water user associations (WUA), with training in bund maintenance, sand bag use for drainage and compaction of the bunds, etc.
- Lowland Rice Development Project (**LRDP**) in particular developed successful models for water management in the valleys and **strong water management committees**, some of which still retain the principles of the training given them during the active life of this project.



RSSP water management

- During RSSP Valley Management Committees (VMC) replaced WUA, but with poor results.
- Training materials for VMC was not available in the communities after the construction phase. Tools such as A-frames were not used in bund and channel construction, to help in proper water distribution.
- Most of the work was done by contractor, **without community involvement.**



- At the end of RSSP project life, many valleys and communities still did not have water user management committee, while some indicated that the committee was no longer functional (24.3 % and 39%, respectively).
- Only 9 out of the 41 communities (22%) surveyed could recollect the number of the people constituting their water user management committee.
- Only one functional water user management committee had a female member.



- It is difficult to see why RSSP could not build on successes of the previous projects and even mobilize some of the LRDP farmers and use them in farmer-to-farmer dissemination of the water management techniques on the field.

Credit access for the stakeholders

The role of RSSP in **credit access** was very **minimal**, despite expectations

Value Chain development

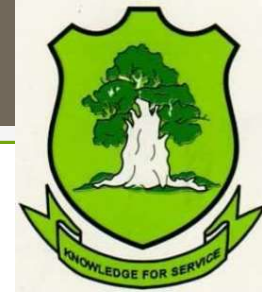


- **Market studies** should be carried out before large project is implemented. This was not done in the case of RSSP
- **Various groups** along the value chain (hullers, aggregators, parboilers, etc.) **were not supported or given only minimal attention.** These include large number of women, who don't have full access to land in most of communities.
- Project should have paid more **attention to female participation** in the farmers groups and develop **appropriate tools** for them.



Research Activities

- Project initially worked with several research partners (FRI, UDS, SARI), but ended with only one eventually.
- **Improvement of the yields** were achieved in many lowlands
- **Rice varieties** developed by the research institute – SARI, seem to have been **adopted across** all the RSSP project regions together with fertilizers and other inputs package
- However, the **focus was on the agricultural technical package** but it neglected farming systems diversity and farmers coping strategies



CONCLUSIONS

- The principle '***one size fits all***' was **not working** for land and water management, value chains, and social organizations of the ambitious RSSP project. Tailored solutions would have achieved better results.
- The **diversity of rice farming systems** and **associated value chains** was not sufficiently considered
- **Lessons from successful pilots were not used** to benefit large-scale project implementation
- There was a **limited research in value chain** development activities, and **attention was only on the technical package** (variety, fertilizer, etc.)



**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION**